

**7.4 Report Purpose: Introduction of allotment admin charge****Author: Assistant Town Clerk****Background**

At the services committee meeting in December, a recommendation was put forward to keep the charge per square metre (20p) the same. The committee requested that consideration be given to introducing an admin charge.

Any changes require 12 months notice so existing tenants would be informed with their annual bill in April, to be implemented in April 2025.

In the table below, I have included information from local sites.

Site	Price per square metre	Do they include admin charge?	Reduction for pensioners
<b>Macclesfield Town Council</b>	<b>£0.20</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>50%</b>
Sparkallot (South Park)	£0.26	None	None
Wilmslow Town Council	£0.21	£15 annual fee on top of rent that is then passed onto the allotment association	None
Brookfield Lane Allotments	£0.20	£14 annual charge on top of rent £25 deposit for new tenants refunded after a year	50% on plot charges but full price admin fee
Moss Lane allotments	£0.20	£4.50 annual charge for insurance	25% for pensioners
Broken Cross allotments	£0.29	£5.00 annual charge for insurance	50% for pensioners

The Assistant Town Clerk contacted The National Allotment Society for their advice on introducing admin charges. They said that admin charges, much like rent, can vary quite drastically across the country. Generally, admin charges are in place for new tenants but some council's do charge all tenants. They recently collected information at the annual meeting on admin charges for new tenants. For the sites that do charge new tenants, the prices ranged from £25 to £100.

## **Conclusion**

The administration of the allotments involves a significant amount of officer time and as the majority of other sites do have some sort of additional charge, it makes sense to look at introducing one. Site inspections have previously been once or twice a year but this year, in order to get on top of the quality of plot maintenance, we are carrying out monthly inspections from March to October. This will take up an increased amount of time as each inspection then leads to further administration. Rents are currently low.

Administration tasks include:

- Issuing invoices
- Registering new tenants
- Showing prospective new tenants around the site
- Site inspections
- Admin follow up from site inspections
- Non cultivation letters
- Non cultivation follow up visits
- Resolving disputes
- Maintenance inspections.
- Accounts and payments
- Administrating the waiting list

Also, rising costs of materials mean that the cost of maintaining the sites is increasing. Costs we may incur are tree maintenance, fence repair and drainage issues.

There are currently 49 tenants.

If an admin charge of £5 per tenant was introduced for all tenants, this would generate an additional £245 in income.

An admin charge of £10 for all tenants would generate an additional £490 in income.

An admin charge of £15 for all tenants would generate an additional £735 in income.

## **Recommendation**

Introducing an admin charge to help go towards costs of administrating the allotment sites. We offer a generous discount for pensioners on rent that is already one of the lowest in the area.

If the admin charge is approved, an updated allotment policy will be submitted to a future Full Council to reflect the change which would not be implemented until April 2025.

## **Action**

To approve the introduction of an admin fee for all allotment holders on the 3 sites that the Town Council manage; Knowsley Road, Park Grove and Springfield Road and if an admin charge is approved, a decision needs to be made on the amount.